

Hangul - Korean Sounds Quick Reference

2022-04-18 (Rev. 2024-01-11)

Main source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_phonology

Consonants

Hangul	Type	Position *1	Romanization	IPA	Example	Note
ㅂ	Plain	x-	b	/p ^(h) / *4	불	
		-x-	b	/b/	비빔밥	Example for all three positions
		-x	p	/p̚/ *2	밥	Example for "-x-" and "-x" positions
ㅃ	Aspirated	x-	p	/p ^h / *4,5	풀	
		-x	p	/p̚/ *2	앞	
ㅍ	Tense		pp	/p̚/ *3,5	빨	
ㄷ	Plain	x-	d	/t ^(h) / *4	달	ㄷ may sound like dzeu/zeu
		-x-	d	/d/	만아들	
		-x	t	/t̚/ *2	만	
ㅌ	Aspirated	x-	t	/t ^h / *4,5	탈	
		-x	t	/t̚/ *2	끝	
ㄸ	Tense		tt	/t̚/ *3,5	딸	
ㅈ	Plain	x-	j	/t͡ɕ ^(h) / *4	자다	
		-x-	j	/t͡ɕ/	콩죽	
		-x	t	/t̚/ *2	맛다	
ㅊ	Aspirated	x-	ch	/t͡ɕ ^h / *4,5	차다	
		-x	t	/t̚/ *2	꽃	
ㅉ	Tense		jj	/t͡ɕ/ *3,5	짜다	
ㄱ	Plain	x-	g	/k ^(h) / *4	기	
		-x-	k	/g/	미국	Example for "-x-" and "-x" positions
		-x	k	/k̚/ *2	미국	Example for "-x-" and "-x" positions
ㅋ	Aspirated	x-	k	/k ^h / *4,5	키	
		-x	k	/k̚/ *2	부엌	
ㄲ	Tense	x-	kk	/k͡/ *2,5	끼	
		-x	k	/k̚/ *2	깎다	
ㅅ	Plain	x-	s	/s/ *4	살	시 may sound like shi
		-x	t	/t̚/ *2	짓다	
ㅆ	Tense	x-	ss	/s͡/ *3,5	쌀	
		-x	t	/t̚/ *2	했다	
ㅁ			m	/m/	물	Emphasic variation: /b/*6
ㄴ			n	/n/	날	Emphasic variation: /d/*6
ㅇ		x-	<i>blank</i>	silent	안녕	Emphasic variation: /h/*6
		-x	ng	/ŋ/	방	
ㄹ		x-	r	/r/	바람	May be pronounced as /l/
		-x	l	/l/	발	May be pronounced as /r/
ㅎ		x-	h	/h/	하다	

*1 **Positions:** The notations "x-" and "-x" refer to the beginning and the end of a syllable, respectively. The notation "-x-" refers to the case where the letter appears between sonorants (including all vowels and certain consonants, i.e., ɱ, ɮ, ɞ, and possibly ɔ).

*2 **Syllable-final stops** (p̚, t̚, k̚): No audible release at the end of a word

*3 **Tense** (p̚, t̚, k̚, t̚ɸ, ɸ̚): This may be produced with a partially constricted glottis and additional subglottal pressure in addition to tense vocal tract walls, laryngeal lowering, or other expansion of the larynx. An alternative analysis proposes that the "tensed" series of sounds are regular voiceless, unaspirated consonants.

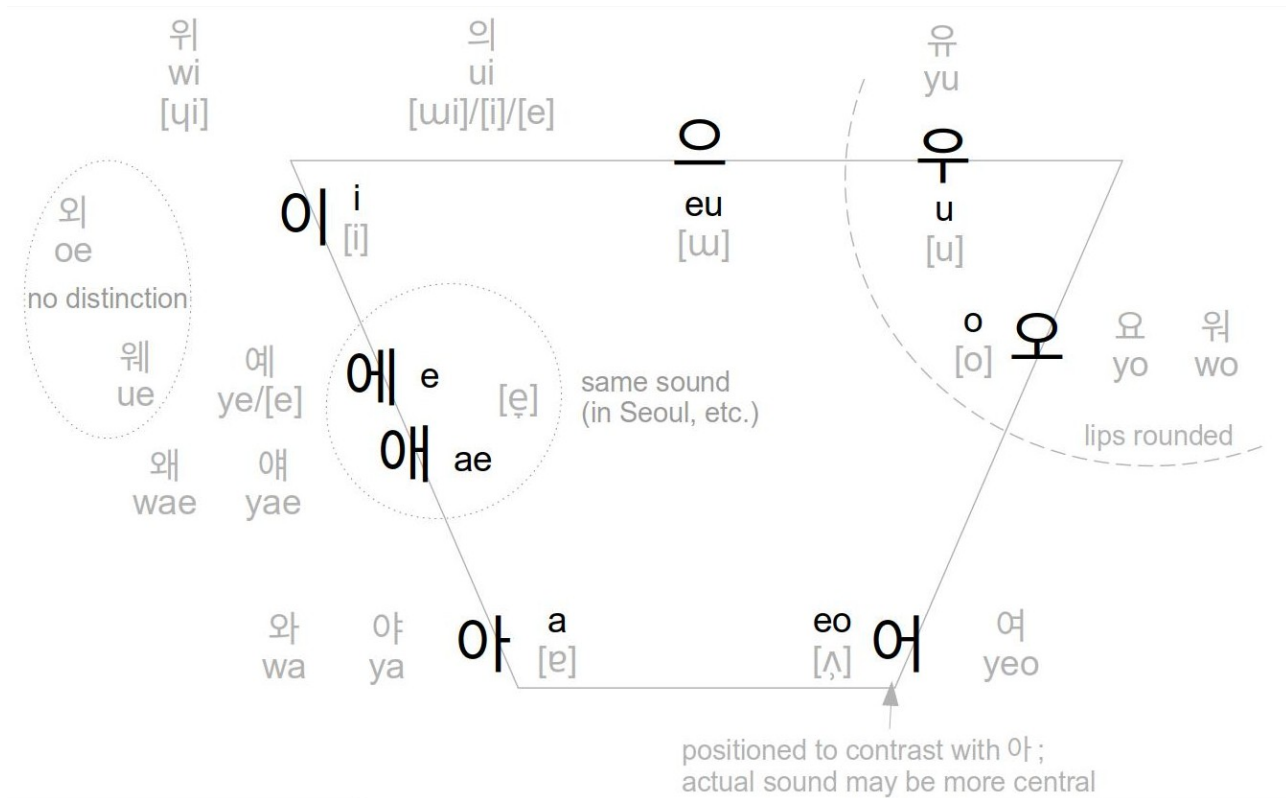
*4 **Plain vs. Aspirated:** This distinction appears to be disappearing. For example, the plain and the "aspirated" versions may actually have the same amount of *aspiration*. The main distinction nowadays is the pitch of the following vowel. The vowel following the "aspirated" version carries a higher pitch.

*5 **Aspirated vs. Tense:** The pitch of the following vowels are high for both. The main distinction is the presence/absence of aspiration.

*6 **Emphatic variations:** ɱ, ɮ, and ɔ may be pronounced as /b/, /d/, and /h/, respectively, especially at the word-initial position and when emphasized.

Vowels

The chart below represents a vowel triangle created only for "learning" purposes, i.e., easier separation of phonemes, and thus, not necessarily accurate. The position of each sound corresponds to the highest position of the tongue. 이 has the most front and highest tongue position along with flat lips. 아 has the lowest position with the most open mouth. 에 and 애 are no longer distinguished in the Seoul area. The actual pronunciation of 오 may be higher or lower, depending on dialects. 오 and 우 are associated with rounded lips. Diphthongs are grayed to emphasize the main phonemes. Also, for 아 vs. 어 and 오 vs. 우, it might be helpful to remember their opposing shapes and positions in the figure.



- 의: [wi] x- / [i] -x- / [e] -x (particle/noun ending)
- 예: [ye] / [e] (after consonant)

Miscellaneous

Pronouncing English Alphabet Letters:

A: 에이, B: 비, C: 시, D: 디, E: 이, F: 에프, G: 지, H: 헤이츠, I: 아이, J: 제이, K: 케이, L: 엘, M: 엠, N: 엔, O: 오, P: 피, Q: 쿼, R: 알, S: 에스, T: 티, U: 유, V: 비, W: 다블유, X: 엑스, Y: 와이, Z: 제드

Pronouncing Numbers in English: 0: 세로, 1: 완, 2: 투/츠, 3: 쓰리/스리, 4: 펄/포, 5: 파이브, 6: 식스, 7: 세븐, 8: 에잇, 9: 나인, 10: 텐



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/). O. Guy Morley (오가이)